



Introduction

Long Beach Bicycle Master Plan Introduction

The City of Long Beach recognizes that a safe and effective bicycling environment enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors to the City. The City and its residents have called for a Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) that will create the foundation for bicycle friendly roads and bikeways which will serve commuter and recreational riders.

This Bicycle Master Plan serves as a policy document to guide the development and maintenance of bicycle friendly roads and bikeways, support facilities and other programs for Long Beach over the next 20 years. These policies address important issues related to Long Beach's roads and bikeways such as planning, community involvement, utilization of existing resources, facility design, multi-modal integration, safety and education, support facilities as well as specific programs, implementation, maintenance and funding.

The success of the plan will only be assured by continued support of the City Staff, the bicycling community and other residents who recognize the benefits of cycling in their community.

This Bicycle Master Plan establishes uniform policies and procedures. It is intended to be used by City Staff as a guideline for projects and programs but does not substitute for engineering knowledge, experience or judgment. Many of the policies and procedures are subject to amendment as conditions and experience seem to warrant. Special situations may call for variation from policies and procedures subject to approval of the City Council. The Bicycle Master Plan is neither intended nor does it establish a legal standard.

Setting

Long Beach is the fifth largest city in California. Throughout its history, the identity of the City has changed with the times. Founded in the late 19th Century, it became a prime seaside resort attracting Midwesterners to settle on the coast. When oil was discovered, in the 1920s, Long Beach experienced a building boom and an expansion of the port. During World War II, Long Beach became an important Navy town. With the recent closure of the Navy base and decline in the aerospace industry, Long Beach has revived itself as a seaside destination with the Aquarium of the Pacific, Queen Mary and Shoreline Village and one of the nation's most economically successful container ports.

The residents of Long Beach reflect its changing history. Long Beach has its base of original Midwesterners, combined with military transplants and large immigrant populations from Latin America and Asia. As a result of this diverse population, Long Beach experiences a rich mix of ethnic neighborhoods.

Today, residents and visitors of Long Beach have access to beaches, parks, harbors and river beds and exposure to diverse cultural amenities centered on the local schools and colleges. They also enjoy a healthy business economy, a lively downtown and marina district with nightlife, restaurants, movie theaters, the Aquarium and other tourist destination sites, and ethnic business districts that cater to the needs of local neighborhoods.

**Existing
Transportation**

As part of the greater Los Angeles region's transportation network, Long Beach includes major transportation corridors that link the Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors to other major cities via the 710 Long Beach Interstate Freeway and the 405 San Diego Interstate Freeway. Other nearby or connecting freeways include the 605 San Gabriel Interstate Freeway, 110 Harbor State Freeway, 105 Glen Anderson Interstate Freeway and 91 Artesia State Freeway. These corridors carry heavy truck and commuter traffic at all hours of the day. The scenic Pacific Coast Highway, which generates daily commuter traffic and holiday drivers, runs through the southern sections of the City.

**Existing Transportation,
continued**

The City is also connected to the region by public transportation services. Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Blue Line provides light rail transit service with a direct route from Long Beach to downtown Los Angeles, along with other bus routes throughout the City. Long Beach Transit is a local transit provider. It uses the Long Beach Veterans Hospital as a transfer point to connect regionally with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, City of Torrance Transit, and Orange County Transportation Authority buses. Long Beach Transit also provides extensive services within the city, including approximately 32 local bus lines, a downtown Passport shuttle with four different routes, an Art Shuttle to local museums and galleries, and an AquaBus in the Queensway Bay. The Greyhound Bus coach service travels across the country and has a bus station in Long Beach.

The Long Beach Bikestation is a public bike center, located in downtown Long Beach, near the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Blue Line. It provides valet bicycle parking, bicycle rental and other amenities.

The Long Beach Municipal Airport is used primarily for domestic flights on three major commercial air carriers, as an alternative to the Los Angeles International Airport. Private planes also use the airport for destination flights throughout the country.

**Bicycle Master Plan
Needed**

The economic vitality of the City of Long Beach brings with it traffic congestion for residents and visitors. For both long commutes and short commutes in the City, people tend to drive, adding to the traffic conditions they dislike. If there were better alternatives, people would be more likely to choose bicycling in the temperate climate, along tree-lined streets, to their destination. In order to achieve this goal, the bicycling environment in Long Beach must be enhanced. Having a planning document such as the Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) that identifies bicycle policies, routes, programs and facility priorities will enable the City to create an attractive alternative.

**Bicycle Master Plan
Needed, continued**

Another reason to have a Bicycle Master Plan is the enjoyment and quality of life for the residents of Long Beach. Since bicycling is one of the most popular forms of recreational activity in the United States (with 46% of Americans bicycling for pleasure), we can assume that based on 1995 data, that out of the 425,000 residents, approximately 195,000 of them would bicycle in Long Beach purely for pleasure, at least occasionally.

Safety is a primary reason to improve bicycling conditions in Long Beach. Concern for safety is the single greatest reason people don't commute by bicycle, according to a 1991 Lou Harris Poll. Addressing those concerns for bicyclists through physical and program improvements is another major objective of this Bicycle Master Plan.

Safety, access, quality of life, and effective implementation are imperative elements for Long Beach's success as a bicycle-friendly city.

Safety is the number one concern of citizens, whether they are avid or casual recreational cyclists or bicycle commuters. The City's wide residential streets in the northern sections of the city create a fairly safe cycling environment, however the widths of the traffic lanes can also contribute to higher vehicle speeds. Heavy traffic volumes combined with narrower streets in the downtown area and Belmont Shore neighborhood increase the likelihood of inexperienced bicyclists using side streets to avoid traffic along the commercial corridors, making safe access to employment centers and shopping destinations problematic. Although it may seem that truck traffic is an issue, the trucks mainly use the 710 Freeway while traveling through Long Beach to get to and from the ports, and only use the City designated truck routes on surface streets occasionally when it is necessary to divert truck traffic off the freeway.



**Access to Los
Angeles River Path is
Difficult**

Access improvements for bicyclists are important to help improve the ability to take utilitarian trips to destinations such as work, shops and schools. The 710 and 405 freeways, involve busy on and off ramps, requiring bicyclists to negotiate difficult interchanges. The unclear access to the river paths

**Bicycle Master Plan
Needed, continued**

makes it difficult for bicyclists to determine the designated bike lanes as potential routes. The most common access problem in Long Beach is the lack of continuous and connected roads with shareable lane width, including bikeways to the City's numerous destinations, including schools, parks, employment and shopping areas.

This Plan urges Long Beach to take measurable steps toward the goal of improving every Long Beach citizen's **quality of life**, creating a more sustainable environment, reducing traffic congestion, vehicle exhaust emissions, noise, and energy consumption. The importance of developing a roads and bikeways network that are attractive and inviting is a key element in preserving Long Beach as a city where people want to live, work, and visit. The attractiveness of the environment not only invites bicyclists to explore Long Beach, but more importantly, a beautiful environment helps to improve everyone's positive feelings about the quality of life in Long Beach.

Education, enforcement, engineering, and funding are the basic components of an **effective implementation** program for this Bicycle Master Plan. Education must be targeted to the bicyclist as well as to the motorist regarding the rights and responsibilities of the bicyclists and automobile drivers. Comprehensive enforcement of existing traffic and parking laws, coupled with the implementation of sound design and engineering principles for all roads is also critical. This plan proposes a systematic review of all new development projects, including public works efforts, to assure compliance with planning and building codes and the goals of this Bicycle Master Plan. Finally, this plan proposes an aggressive strategy for obtaining grants and competing for other funding sources in order to realize the physical improvements identified as the highest priorities.

**Major
Recommendations**

The plan contains recommendations that, if implemented over the next 20 years, will make Long Beach a model community for bicycling in the Los Angeles region. The City as well as the public has asked for a bold vision for Long Beach that will improve conditions for those who choose to ride a bicycle for commuter and recreational use. Through surveys, workshops,

**Major
Recommendations,
continued**

letters and meetings, residents have cited concerns about traffic congestion, safety and general livability as the primary impetus to implement the plan. The end result will be to dramatically increase the number of people bicycling for utilitarian trips such as work, school or shopping, as well as for recreational bicyclists. The BMP calls for a goal of increasing bicycle use for utilitarian trips from the current one percent to a targeted five percent by the year 2020.

The specific recommendations of the BMP includes bicycle friendly development including the completion of a roads and bikeways network, and the implementation of new educational and promotional programs to be implemented over the next 20 years. Short-term projects are listed in order of preference:

- Bicycle Signage Program
- Bicycle Parking Program
- Bicycle Safety Awareness Program
- Downtown-Alamitos Bay Bikeway
- Los Angeles River Access
- Midtown 10th Street Connection
- CSULB
- Alamitos Avenue-Orange
- Westminster Avenue Bikeway
- Pacific Avenue-San Antonio Drive Bikeway
- Del Amo Boulevard Bikeway
- Pacific Center Boeing Site
- Harding Street

Bikeways are described by Caltrans in Chapter 1000 of the Highway Design Manual as being one of three basic type.

Class I Bikeway Variouslly called a bike path or multi-use trail. Provides for bicycle travel on a paved right of way completely separated from any street or highway.

Class II Bikeway Referred to as a bike lane. Provides a striped lane for one-way travel on a street or highway.

Class III Bikeway Referred to as a bike route. Provides for shared use with pedestrian or motor vehicle traffic and is identified only by signing.

Public Process

This plan has been developed during the summer and fall of 2000 by the City of Long Beach, Public Works Department. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the City and other governmental agencies was established to oversee the project. The TAC includes representatives from the City's Public Works Traffic and Transportation Bureau, Planning Bureau, Neighborhood Resources Bureau, Police Department, Parks, Recreation and Marine Department, and other agencies including Long Beach Transit and Long Beach Unified School District. In addition, the public has been involved in the planning process at two public workshops that were held at four different neighborhood locations throughout the City. An additional public workshop was also held during the 30 day public review process at one central location in the City. The public workshops were advertised through the media, bicycle shops, city hall, local YMCA's, neighborhood meetings, mailings to neighborhood and community association leaders and other means. Public attendees included residents, Long Beach Cyclists and Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, Bikestation representatives, and the voluntary group known as Long Beach 90800. Additional information from the public was collected through bicycle surveys.